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The President's Daily Brief

Sensitive

6 May 1972

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Top Secret

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

6 May 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The lull in the Vietnam fighting continues as enemy regiments regroup and move closer to the cities of Hue and Kontum in preparation for the next assault. *(Page 1)*

[redacted] 25X1
[redacted] South Vietnam [redacted] 25X1
(Page 2)

An important North Vietnamese military commentator has characterized the current offensive as only the beginning of a prolonged military initiative. *(Page 4)*

The Communists are maintaining a heavy flow of supplies to the battle areas in South Vietnam. *(Page 5)*

On *Page 7* [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] Indian [redacted] Pakistan [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1

The resignation of the Cypriot foreign minister and President Makarios' promise to reshuffle his government are apparently meant to placate Athens. *(Page 8)*

In Cambodia, the Communists have attacked several points in and around Phnom Penh. *(Page 9)*

[redacted] USSR [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] Iraq. *(Page 9)* 25X1

West German Chancellor Brandt and opposition leader Barzel failed yesterday to resolve their remaining differences over the Eastern treaties but will try again. *(Page 9)*

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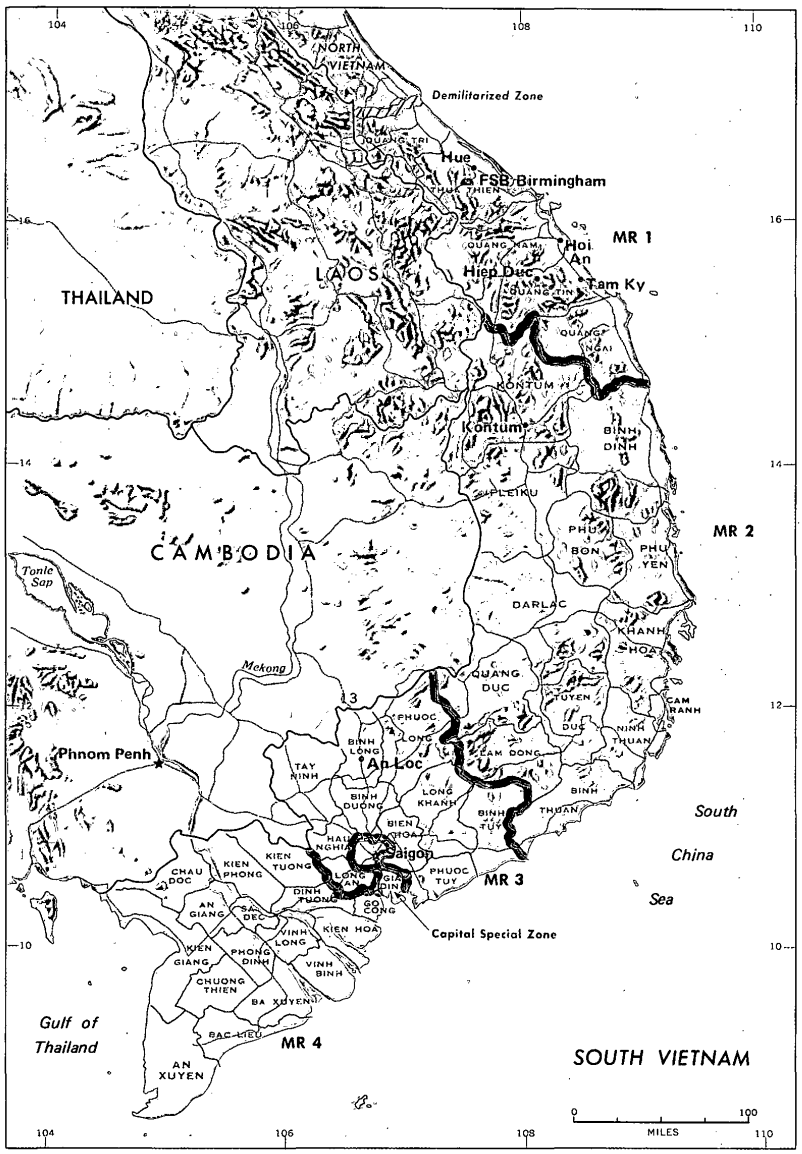

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VIETNAM

The lull in the fighting continues as enemy regiments regroup and move closer to the cities of Hue and Kontum in preparation for the next assault. Fire Support Base Birmingham, ten miles west of Hue, was hit yesterday by heavy fire from North Vietnamese 130-mm. artillery. Casualties were light, but the increased use of artillery by the enemy near Hue suggests that other defensive positions around the city may soon come under heavy fire.

To the south, in Quang Tin Province, [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] the Communists hope 25X1
to follow up the recent capture of Hiep Duc town by
attacking Tam Ky, the provincial capital. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1
25X1

The Communists are continuing to shell An Loc daily; over 700 rounds were fired on 4 May. The government has flown in more supplies and replacements and has evacuated some wounded by helicopter. The South Vietnamese 21st Division remains bogged down on Route 13 south of An Loc. The division's apparent reticence to move toward the besieged town and its abandonment of an artillery base in the vicinity cast doubt on the determination of the South Vietnamese forces sent to relieve An Loc.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

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NORTH VIETNAM

An important North Vietnamese military commentator who is known as an advocate of main-force warfare has characterized the current offensive as only the first part of a prolonged military initiative. In an article on 3 May, the writer who uses the pseudonym "Chien Thang," claims that Communist successes in Laos and Cambodia last year prepared the way for the current effort and that the Communists now have sufficient "latent strength" in Vietnam to fight protractedly and on a large scale. Discussing the current action, he describes the "enlarged liberated areas" as "extended offensive springboards" and adds that the Communists have gained the initiative on all fronts.

By linking the current offensive to larger military plans, "Chien Thang" seems to be signaling to the North Vietnamese people and armed forces, as well as to the US and Saigon, that North Vietnam does not intend to rest on its laurels and that Hanoi has not yet exhausted its military resources. The author's glowing assessment of North Vietnam's military prospects may also reflect rising expectations and hardened determination within the highest echelons of the leadership.

Over the past year, "Chien Thang" and other commentators have surfaced from time to time to argue the virtues of "big offensives" and conventional warfare, and may now feel vindicated. In his latest piece, "Chien Thang" in fact asserts that the Communists' "victories across the battlefield have most clearly proven that our guidance of the revolutionary war is very correct."

Such posturing is obviously to some extent for morale purposes, but it may also be an indication that after the first month of the offensive, the leadership is genuinely convinced it made the right decision. Indeed, there is a strong suggestion in the "Chien Thang" article that at least some North Vietnamese leaders are increasingly confident that continued military action will alter the course of the conflict decisively.

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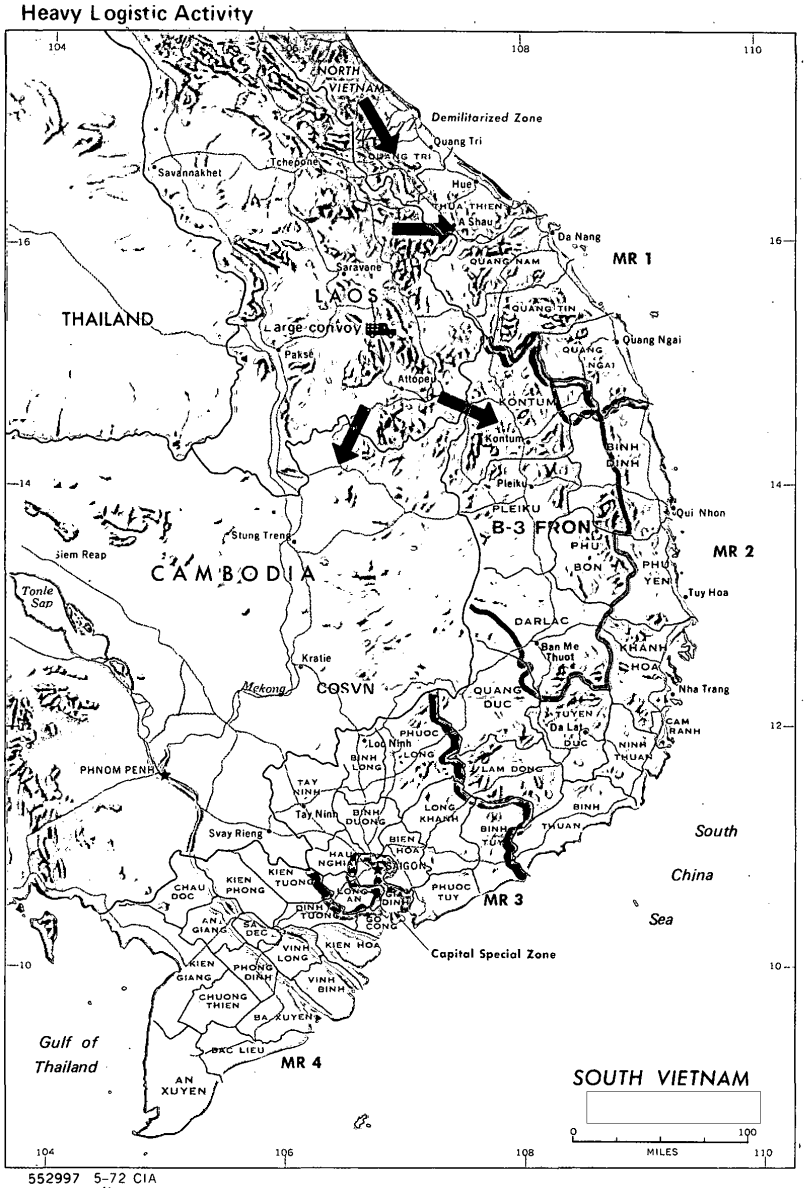
Heavy Logistic Activity



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INDOCHINA

The intensity of the enemy's logistic operations is clearly reflected in sensor-detected supply deliveries to South Vietnam, which have reached a high for this dry season campaign. Aerial observers report extensive supply activity on roads through the DMZ to Military Region 1, and communications intelligence also reflects heavy resupply activity into this region via the A Shau Valley.

In the southern Lao panhandle, the Communists are moving 130-mm. field guns and vehicles with bridging equipment, as well as large amounts of ordnance. The 130-mm. fields guns are en route to the B-3 Front or to the COSVN area, while the engineering equipment is earmarked for both areas and will be used for bridging swollen streams during the wet season. One unusual development is the dispatch beginning on 4 May of at least two transportation battalions, and over 100 vehicles carrying 600 tons of ordnance from southern Laos directly to the COSVN area.

> *This exceptionally large convoy and its lengthy journey represent a radical departure from the normal pattern of short-haul transshipping. The change indicates an urgent need to increase the amount of ordnance available to forces in southern South Vietnam. In addition, the arrival of two transportation battalions--each carrying a month's supply of food and gasoline--will significantly improve the enemy's resupply capability in the COSVN area.*

The Communists apparently intend to maintain the current logistics push into the wet season. A logistic authority in Laos is scheduled to ship 3,600 tons of supplies to Military Region 1 during the month of May. In support of this effort, messages have referred to the "rainy season mission" as well as to the graveling of roads and other plans to offset the effects of the rains. An intercept of 2 May indicated that another logistic authority in Laos in the vicinity of the Mu Gia Pass was to transfer cargo from its storage areas to points south and wait for a new assignment--suggesting that the enemy will reroute convoys through the drier North Vietnamese panhandle as the monsoons progress.

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INDIA-PAKISTAN

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CYPRUS

Foreign Minister Kyprianou has resigned. According to press reports, President Makarios told his cabinet on Thursday that this decision was taken in response to Greek pressure and added that, at the insistence of Athens, he will carry out a government reshuffle next month.

Makarios, having outmaneuvered Greek efforts to force his resignation and outsmarting them in the compromise reached over control of Czechoslovak arms on Cyprus, apparently now believes he can safely make a conciliatory gesture toward Athens. He apparently believes that the influence of pan-Hellenism among Greek Cypriots is too strong for him to ignore the Greek Government without, in the long run, causing serious popular dissatisfaction. Although he will probably remove a few cabinet members objectionable to Athens, he is also likely to use the opportunity to dismiss those who have been giving him trouble in recent months. We see no give on his part on the question of Cypriot sovereignty.

Greece's recent avoidance of any communication with Makarios is unnerving to the Turkish Government, which had been quietly backing Athens' efforts to bring Makarios to heel. The Turks want no crisis over Cyprus, but they are chafing because they have been poorly informed by Athens about the Greek Government's next steps. The Turks are suspicious that Greek silence may mean that efforts to control Makarios have been abandoned without guaranteeing the security of the Turkish minority. 25X1

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NOTES

Cambodia: The Communists launched a coordinated shelling and sapper attack on several areas of Phnom Penh early this morning but damage and casualties appear to have been light. The Pochentong airfield and an area around the National Defense Ministry were hit by rockets, while a naval base, a major bridge and a power station in the southern part of the city were shelled. Cambodian forces repulsed a ground attack near the bridge. Today's attack is the most ambitious the Communists have conducted in the Phnom Penh area and is fresh evidence of the city's vulnerability to hit-and-run raids. 25X1

Iraq-USSR: [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

West Germany: In their meeting yesterday, Chancellor Brandt and opposition leader Barzel again failed to resolve their remaining differences over the Eastern treaties. The last of the three interparty drafting committees is still trying to find an acceptable formulation of the German view that the Eastern treaties do not preclude a German peace treaty or eventual reunification. This formula will comprise a crucial part of the proposed Bundestag resolution to be passed to the Soviets for acknowledgment. With the Bundestag debate and vote on the treaties slated for 9-10 May, the two leaders will try again at an unspecified date.

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